

DRAFT Rapid Transit Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
EOB 9th Floor Auditorium
June 24, 2015 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Voting Members In-Attendance

Sean Egan; Andrew Gunning; Al Roshdieh; Dan Wilhelm.

Non-Voting Members

Carolyn Biggins; Joana Conklin; Gary Erenrich; Brady Goldsmith; Rick Kiegel; Stacy Leach; Tom Pogue; Frank Spielberg.

Other Attendees

Nancy Abeles; Jamaica Arnold; Andrew Bing; Sean Emerson; Celesta Jurkovich; Stephen B. Miller; Rafael Olarte; Harriet Quinn; Reemberto Rodriguez; Geri Rosenberg; Paul Seder; Phil Shapiro.

Handouts

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Minutes for March and April
- Copy of MD 586 Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Summary
- Stakeholder Feedback Still to be Considered
- Draft Montgomery County RTS Alternatives, Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Criteria

Introductions and Welcome

Al Roshdieh started the meeting at 4:05 pm. The meeting started with all attendees introducing themselves.

Approval of Minutes for March 25, 2015 and April 29, 2015.

Minutes for March 25, 2015 were approved with one change – drop Jonathan Parker as speaking about the Priorities Letter. Minutes for the April meeting were approved as is.

Update on RTS Corridor Advisory Committees (CACs)

Andrew Bing led this discussion. His presentation can be found on the RTS web site. The CACs have all met three times in the last four months. Attendance and participation have been very strong. All presentations and meeting summaries are posted on the RTS web site.

Al Roshdieh – A question came up at a meeting of the Finance Work Group of the Transit Task Force of why there was no discussion of finances for the CACs. It's recommended to check the web site to see what the expectations of the CACs are. The Transit Task Force, which has been activated, is looking at an Independent Transit Authority; RTS is moving independents of the

Transit Task Force. The County Executive set up the RTS Steering Committee to look into the implementation of an RTS System.

Mr. Bing continued his presentation with an overview of the CACs. The informational open house meetings have been postponed until the Fall. Once the new dates are identified, the public will be informed through a series of outreach efforts.

MD586 is at a different stage from the rest of the CACs. They have reviewed conceptual alternatives and the alternatives retained for detailed study. The next meeting of the CAC will be a review of the ARDS, which will be presented in detail. Mr. Bing did not go into detail since all the meeting summaries can be found on the web site.

Joana Conklin – in your packet you have a summary for the MD586 meeting discussed in this presentation. The other summaries have not been finalized yet. The open houses do not involve MD586. An open for MD586 will be some time in the Spring. There is a lot of feedback from the members.

US29 and MD355 have a draft purpose and need, transit ridership, traffic operations, BRT running way options. The two CACs have been following the same path in the beginning, but this should change shortly. The next meeting will be a technical meeting on transit ridership and traffic operations – including modeling, since there have been a lot of questions about models. This is a voluntary meeting since some of the members don't want more information. One of the big items to come out of the meeting was a need MD650 to be studied. The funding has been approved to add a 6th CAC to cover MD650.

Q) Will the MD650 study stop at White Oak?

A) No, it will go all the way to the district line, but not the entire road.

US29 and MD 355 will have their 4th meeting in the summer and a 5th meeting in the fall. MD586 will have meeting 4 in the fall.

A lot of work is being done. At meeting 3 the teams did a better job of presenting and the members of the CACs are doing a good job of providing their feedback in a constructive way.

Debrief from Department of Legislative Services Tour

Al Roshdieh led this discussion. There were 12-15 attendees. One month ago, Secretary Peter Rahne met with the County Executive for a one hour briefing and a two hour tour, which was very positive. Mr. Roshdieh gave a broad overview of Montgomery County Transportation and Joana Conklin gave a briefing focusing on the background of Montgomery County and the RTS projects. Mark Winston also gave a brief presentation on the Transit Task Force. There wasn't time to show all the corridors, but the tour did hit some of the corridors by bus. The tour also showed Bikeshare stations. Gary Erenrich was impressed that only one attendee has any experience in Montgomery County. It was mostly younger people who attended and only one had been raised in Montgomery County. The rest had not lived in the County. One corridor they

were unable to take the attendees to was US29, but an aerial view was shown. The presentation will be posted to the RTS web site.

Q) Were these people involved in Transportation decisions?

A) Yes.

This is the second tour that has been done. Offers have been made to do other tours if there are other staff who need to see this. A suggestion was made to do this with other Counties. Melanie Wenger arranges tours for all freshman delegates from the State.

Transit Task Force Activities

Mark Winston was unable to attend the meeting, so there was no update of the Transit Task Force. Dan Wilhelm gave a little information. There was a public hearing that ran four hours with about 55 speakers. There were a number of people signed up to testify who did not show. The record is open to the end of the month and all this will be posted on the web site.

Q) Will there be meeting minutes?

A) The video will be posted online and the minutes will be published. The decision has been made to start recording all the CAC meetings.

Corridor Cities Transitway Update

Rick Kiegel will be briefing the County Executive next week. The CCT continues to be on schedule with a 30% design completion by October. There will then be a meeting to see how the project will continue with regards to funding. The CCT has completed the Area Advisory Committee (AAC) meetings – 8 meetings held over the last year and a half with three different AACs. Feels the AAC members left the final meeting very satisfied with their opportunity. The last 8-10 month SHA has been working on the environmental assessment document published. The holdup was FTA's busy schedule prevented them from giving the CCT a thorough review. In the last month they have given us their final comments on the document and most comments were minor and easy to address. The one big item they point out has to do with section 4F – the consideration of historical properties along the corridor (namely Belwork Farm). We can find a feasible alternative to impacting the farm, so, in the short term we must bypass the farm by using another road (Muddy Branch and Darnestown). This could change since its private property, if Hopkins moves forward with their development, then the Maryland Historical Trust would reevaluate its designation, and if they decide the historical character has been changed, then if we are not in construction or operation, the CCT could revert back to its original plan. The updated environmental assessment document will need to be resubmitted to FTA based on the comments given and the bypass/avoidance of the farm, and the changes in the project that have occurred since the document was written last fall. A public hearing is planned for the Fall which is later than SHA wanted to hold it. The final environmental process could be completed by the first quarter next year.

Q) Is it the whole farm or just the farm house?

A) The whole farm site, even though the farm house is the historical part. Hopkins doesn't have to tear down the farm building for their development. There is a buffer area to protect the original buildings.

Q) What's the status of the purple line?

A) I'm not a part of that project.

Q) Is the Environmental Assessment Document online yet?

A) No, this is the first time that information has been shared. SHA is hoping to have that information on the web site soon.

Discussion of RTS Goals, Objectives and Evaluation Measures

Joana Conklin led this discussion. The County is currently working with SHA and other stakeholders to come up with goals, objectives and evaluation measures for the BRT. This presentation can be found on the RTS web site.

Q) Is this focus just on BRT?

A) Yes.

Goals are the broad statements of a desired state. Objectives are the specific statements that describe the desired outcome and evaluation measures are used to quantify objectives. The role is to provide a framework for evaluating alternatives. Early involvement leads to more stakeholder and public concurrence with results of study. Evaluation measures are used to evaluate alternatives. Data requirements for quantifying evaluation measures should be established early on in the study. Ms. Conklin showed the process visually by using a graph to show where the County is now and where we need to be. You can also find an example of a tradeoff analysis framework in the presentation, showing how alternatives can be broken down to look at the different measures.

C) This gives each of the measures equal weight.

R) That's true. Part of what you get from this is a frame work to provide your policy makers with more information. We are trying to differentiate between alternatives. You can start looking at the differences. What we are trying to do is figure out what is ultimately going to be studied.

C) Different sized circles could show what is more important.

R) You would have a hard time doing that because you

C) Each policy maker's prospective might be different. It doesn't need to be weighted.

R) What's important depends on who you ask – who's weighting it.

C) Trying to look at the Masterplan, and if it doesn't meet the Masterplan, then it's not a good

alternative. Part of the problem is not knowing how this was going to be used.

R) We need to do a better job up front of explaining how we are going to use this.

A lot of the Vision Statement was taken from the Masterplan.

C) We need to say where the Masterplan is putting the BRT – for example, Clarksburg is important, but it's not part of BRT. Also, the network should be embedded. We are looking at this as a network, not a corridor. Stakeholders and the Steering Committee have seen it. We should send it to the CACs for comments, but the Steering Committee needs to approve it.

C) There's a lot of assumptions in the vision statement

R) We used the best information we had available.

C) Maybe you should put something in that makes it a changing document.

R) This is just a general document. We are not predicting a different vision then the Council of Government.

C) What is being said it that this shouldn't be a static document. We need to have flexibility.

R) Please write down what changes you think should be made and we can present it to the CACs.

C) Shocked to see those first three pages. It seems like this should have been done at the start three years ago. It feels like everything is being done to make BRT work now – square peg in a round hole.

R) This has been evolving and these types of discussion have taken place. This is the policy of the Planning Board/Council as they approve the Master Plan.

Goal 1: Improve Competitiveness of Transit

- Make trips by transit faster; make door to door transit travel time competitive with door to door automobile travel time; increase transit ridership

Q) BRT only or would it include the restructure of RideOn?

A) Door to door would capture RideOn.

C) Need to say upfront what you are going to include.

R) Ultimately, it's how long will you be travelling, no matter how you travel, from home to where you want to go. Think it's a good way to measure.

C) First slide – these measures should be looking at the alternatives, no matter what they are. This is how you should evaluate other modes of transportation.

R) We are not coming up with new alternatives; we are using the current alternatives. We spent a lot of time talking about these and there could be very few differences in the alternatives.

Goal 2: Provide an adequate level of service for all modes

- Serve as many travelers as possible by efficiently utilizing the existing right of way; provide adequate travel times for automobile and transit users; minimize increased travel time by automobile; enhance pedestrian and bicycle options in the corridors.

C) What are adequate travel times? Very vague measure.

C) There's a denominator here. If I am working 8 hours a day, it doesn't really matter if I have an extra 20 minutes. However, if I'm shopping, that extra 10 minutes is a big difference.

R) We don't have an analytical way to evaluate that. Work trips are an estimated 20% of the travel in a day. Trying to set things here to differentiate between the different alternatives.

C) 2.4 – Not going to get into some of that stuff at this point.

R) All will probably be the same.

C) If it's below the level of detail you plan to use, then why have it?

R) Because we want to use this in the future to evaluate.

Goal 3: Improve Montgomery County resident's quality of life by improving transit options

- provide premium transit service convenient to households and jobs within the corridor; make the transfer between premium bus and rail transit direct; provide an appealing transit service that will attract new riders; engage public in the process.

Q) What is a premium transit service?

A) A bus that doesn't stop at every stop.

C) We already have RideOn as our base, the question here is can any of these new alternatives be better than rail.

C) Need to have all these transfers. Don't want the RideOn station ½ a mile from the BRT station.

R) You're looking at a major transfer station since you are going to have more RideOn stations.

Goal 4: Provide improved transportation services that supports transit oriented

-development Improve alternative transportation service to and between activity centers; increase trips by alternative modes to support development in the master plan

Q) Aren't the goals in 3 and 4 the same thing? Are we measuring it twice?

A) Yes we are. Goal number 4 had more objectives, but two were removed.

Goal 5: Provide environmentally sustainable transportation options

-serve residents with low incomes who rely on transit; minimize private property requirements outside of the master plan right of way; maintain environmental quality.

Q) Is private property going to be a problem on 355? This is very complex and should be indexed in some way.

A) We will have to look at the impacts in each area differently.

Q) Egresses – what are the traffic issues?

A) Yes, we need to add that.

C) I see some differences here with a curb and a median BRT. You would need to close them off at certain times of the day.

C) Right of way versus the existing curb. The right a way might be outside of the curb – you probably need both.

C) Median lanes have fewer conflicts than curb lanes.

R) Safety is important and we should add.

Goal 6: Provide transportation options that are affordable to build and operate
-proved transportation services that are affordable for Montgomery County and its
partners to build and operate

If you have any comments, please send them to Joana.

Meeting Calendar

The next meeting is scheduled for August 26, 2015 in the EOB Auditorium at 4:00 pm. The July meeting was cancelled. The topics Dan Wilhelm mentioned will be looked at to add to the next agenda.

Al Roshdieh ended the meeting at 5:47 pm.